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EAST TIMOR CNRM TIMOR LORO SAE
National Council of Maubere Resistance

Indonesian academics protest military killings of East Timorese civilians

MEDIA RELEASE

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Indonesian intellectuals from the Satya Wacana Christian University (UKSW) have expressed their concerns at the recent massacre of East Timorese civilians by the Indonesian Armed Forces (ABRI). Calling themselves, the *Solidarity Forum for Upholding Human Rights*, 55 prominent members of the University two weeks ago wrote a letter to the Indonesian President, the Chief of the Armed Forces, and the National Commission on Human Rights. The letter was only released to the international public earlier this week.

Complaining about the fact that human life seems to be valueless in their beloved country, where law seems to be ignored by power and the strength of arms, the brave Indonesian academics demand that the root causes of the Liquiça massacre be thoroughly investigated. They call for the work of the National Commission on Human Rights to proceed without pressures, independently and objectively; and for this problem to be objectively resolved according to the law.

The UKSW academics also appeal to the Indonesian Government to end all forms of 'security approach' in their dealings with East Timor, replacing it with a more humane way to maintain local order.

This latest appeal is highly significant. It points to the increasing awareness among Indonesian intellectuals about their government's responsibility for the tragic East Timor situation. Coming from UKSW makes this appeal even more outstanding. This academic community is currently undergoing turmoil as a result of the dismissal of a most vocal member, the well known Dr Arief Budiman. Another member, Dr George Junus Aditjondro, of international fame for his brave and outspoken criticism of Indonesian policies in East Timor, has been under interrogation by police, facing a possible trial. Aditjondro is accused of insulting government officials at a seminar. The true aim seems to be to punish him for exposing and criticising Indonesia's shameful East Timor occupation record.

In the context of attacks on academic freedom from both the Indonesian authorities and those of the university, the daring protest by 55 members of the academic community of UKSW deserves high praise. It once again underlines the increasing concern by conscious Indonesians about the scandalous government handling of the East Timor conflict. As Indonesians gain access to more information about the 20 year old war, they reject with increasing strength the shameful and damaging policies followed by their rulers in illegally occupied East Timor. END

Media Contact: Kate Khoori + 61 2 368 0396